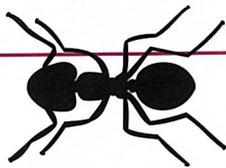


Flea tic(k)



sanne Kropman provides some practical tips for pet owners wanting to enjoy furry company but not their bugs.

Sometimes you're lucky as an editor with the articles you have to write, and sometimes, well, you're just not. Writing about fleas and ticks brought back fond memories of our own cats and dogs, making me scratch all over. Luckily, there are many ways to prevent these bugs from getting on you, the pets or in your house.

Profile: Flea



- The Latin name for fleas is Siphonaptera, meaning 'wingless bloodsucking' insects.
- They have extremely strong hind legs, allowing them to jump. In the past, it was assumed that fleas were able to fly.
- The most common fleas in the Netherlands are cat fleas. Human and dog fleas are relatively rare.
- Fleas are not dangerous, just an itchy nuisance.
- Animals can be effectively treated against fleas. The poisons used are not dangerous for the pet and either prevent the fleas from reproducing or kill them. Ask your vet or pet shop for advice.



Profile: Tick



- The amount of ticks (parasite mites) in the Netherlands is increasing due to a decrease in wildlife and nature areas.
- When bitten, it's best to remove the tick within 24 hours with a tick pincer. Don't just pull it out, because you run the risk of the tick 'spitting' the contents of its stomach back into the carrier, increasing the likelihood of disease.
- You can protect yourself against ticks by wearing long trousers, using DEET or another anti-insect lotion. You can protect your pets with insecticides like Permethrin (not suitable for cats).

The danger of Lyme Disease

The bacteria which causes Lyme disease is carried by 23.6 per cent of the ticks found in the Netherlands as compared to the European average of 10.1 per cent. Since the majority of the bites happen in the woods and in people's own yards, it is wise to be cautious and check your family, yourself and your pets once indoors. If you have been bitten, keep a close watch over the area around the bite for the next six weeks. If you've been infected with the bacteria causing Lyme disease, a red ring will form around the bite. Ask your doctor for advice and antibiotics.



Pet of the issue

Besides being overwhelmingly handsome, Turner is a former shelter dog from Maryland, USA. He is five-years-old and a mix of something and who-knows-what and moved to the Netherlands after his American mommy married his Dutch daddy. From country to city and the US to NL, he's been a real trouper and a great pal. Turner loves going on walks in Bosch en Duin and hanging out at his park in Utrecht, playing with his toys and trying to get cats to love him. As his dad only speaks Dutch to him when he's been bad, he hasn't really cared to learn the language. Turner is currently learning how to run alongside a bicycle.

Do you have a pet that you would like to see in FM? Send all photos and a short email saying why your pet should be included to pets@family-matters.nl.